A

LETTER

TO THE

Rev. SAMUEL DENNIS, D. D.

Vice-Chancellor of OXFORD, and Prefident of St. JOHN'S COLLEGE:

IN REPLY TO A LETTER SIGNED

VINDEX,

In the St. *James's Chronicle* of the 16th of *October* 1783.

By the Rev. PHILIP WITHERS, D. D.

LONDON:

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Reverend Sir.

I BEG Leave to engage your Attention a few Moments—I will not detain you longer than the Importance of the Subject will justify.

On the 16th of October, a Letter signed VINDEX, dated from Oxford, appeared in the St. James's Chronicle. The Writer has been pleased to treat my Reputation with an unreserved Freedom, and to charge me in direct Terms with IGNORANCE and METHODISM.

It is my Design to prove that the Charge is founded in Mistake. And I entreat you, Sir, to believe me when I say, that I have no Resentments to be gratified by this Reply: on the contrary I feel myself under an unintentional Obligation to my Opponent: for he has not only, by concealing his Name, afforded me the Pleasure of appealing to a Gentleman of Learning and Candor, but he has also done a most essential Service to that very Reputation which his Letter was formed to injure: since it appears, that after the most industrious Enquiry into my Life and Conversation, he could reproach me with Nothing but Ignorance and Methodism; and therefore, if this Letter remove the Imputation,

putation, it will leave my Character pure and perfect. But I am conſcious of too many Frailties to lay claim to ſuch honorable Diſtinction. I am indeed in the ardent Purſuit of a well regulated Mind; but "*I have not attained to it*" tho' for the Sovereignty of my own Heart, I would reject the Scepter of univerſal Dominion.

I do not Complain, Sir, as having ſuffered an unprecedented Injury. I know that this World is ths Habitation of ENVY; that the Multitude of Mankind are under its malignant Influence; and that he, who is in the Poſſeſſion or Purſuit of any Excellence, is beheld with a prejudiced Eye: his Courage is Temerity; his

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Patriotiſm, Faction; his Learning, Pedantry; and his Piety, Enthuſiaſm: in a word, his Virtues are Vices; and his Infirmities are Crimes. One Inſtance of Impropriety in Conduct is ſufficient to awaken the Powers of Detraction and to ſtain the unſullied Purity of a long and uſeful Life: and it is truly aſtoniſhing how chearfully ſome Men will blow up the Flame of Contention, circulate the Whiſpers of Reproach, or give to Trifles, light as Air, the Gravity of ſerious Facts.

In younger Life we are alarmed and diſtreſt at ſuch Uſage; but a more enlarged View of Men and Things moderates our Solicitude: and we at length learn that it is

Wiſdom

Wiſdom to diſmis our Fears, and to move with an undiſturbed Serenity down the Current of Life; declining with decent Reſpect the Applauſe of the Virtuous, pitying and forgiving the Malevolence of the Wicked, and patiently referring the Deciſion of every Controverſy to the Tribunal of ETERNAL TRUTH.

Defamation indeed ſeems to be inſeparable from this State of Frailty and Sin: "*Woe unto you*, ſaith Chriſt, *of whom all Men ſpeak well*;" Woe unto you who are ſo undecided in Character, ſo Proteus like in Mind, that you can accommodate your Manners to every Complexion of Men. Ye are of the World, or the World would hate you, for if they pre-

preſumed to ſay to the Maſter, "*thou haſt a Devil*" what may not, what muſt not, the Diſciples expect? In Fact, the Oppoſition of Vice to Virtue, and Infidelity to Religion is ſo conformable to the Nature of Things, that it is an Argument of Inexperience to be ſurprized at it; and the only unpleaſant Circumſtance is, when thoſe, who are in the Habit of Friendſhip to the ſame Cauſe, give a precipitate Belief to the Calumny and Falſhood of the Adverſary.

I hope no one will do me the Injuſtice to think, that I am now ſoliciting the Favor and Applauſe of the World. To reduce indeed thoſe who are in Oppoſition to my Senti-

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ments to a Dilemma, to compel them to withdraw the Imputation of Methodiſm from the Syſtem of Faith hereafter ſtated, or to acknowledge that Ignorance and Methodiſm are not aſſociated by their Nature, is an Object of the firſt Magnitude; and I am free to confeſs that the Accompliſhment of the Object will add to the Satisfactions of my Mind. But as to Praiſe or Preferment, I neither merit nor expect it; *my* Ambition is ſatisfied in the Glory of the Croſs; a Glory, Reverend Sir, of which few will envy me the Enjoyment.

The Letter ſigned VINDEX comprehends a twofold Deſign—to exonerate the *Univerſities* from the

Weight of Cenſure, in Mr. Knox's Eſſay; and to reproach me with Methodiſm and Ignorance. I acknowledge the Truth and Juſtice of that Poſition which abſolves the Univerſities from the Charge of Corruption, and which aſcribes the Depravity of our youth to inferior Seminaries: but I want Evidence to convince me that *private Academies* are the Cauſe of moral Diſſipation at Oxford and Cambridge. I am diſpoſed to think that the Seeds of Iniquity take Root and Bloſſom in our great public Schools, *Eaton*, *Weſtminſter*, *Wincheſter*, &c. and being tranſplanted into Regions of ſtill leſs Reſtraint, they bring forth Fruit abundantly, "ſome an hundred, and ſome a thouſand fold." But it is a ſerious

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Conſideration, Sir, that it is a Fruit not unto Life and Honor, but unto Death and Deſtruction.

Whether the Evils, of which Mr. Knox complains, have an Exiſtence at Oxford I cannot determine, but, ſince I am on the Subject, I beg leave to aſſure that Gentleman, that the very Reverſe of the Practice obtains at *Cambridge*; at leaſt it did, when I had the Honor and Happineſs of reſiding in that great and glorious Eſtabliſhment. It is true there are, (and always will be) young Men of independent Fortunes and diſſipated Morals, whom no Example can animate, no Authority influence, and whoſe ſupreme Delight is to corrupt the Good, and to make the

Bad abandoned. But was it fair to draw the Picture from "*Wisdom's Sorrow*" instead of the real Scholar? Was it candid to overlook the truest Ornaments of the University, and to contemplate only its Deformities? But admitting that Matters are exactly as stated in the Essay, I must still condemn the Severity of his Censure. A *private* Remonstrance, written in Terms of becoming Respect, would have done him Honor; but an Attack so open, wants a Name. It seems, indeed, to be the Language of *Disappointment*, and to exhibit the Man rather in his Feelings than his Judgment.

I am no less surprized at Mr. Knox's precipitate Censure of Metaphysics:

physics: and I desire to ask this Gentleman how he can strictly and properly demonstrate any Proposition that relates to the Being of God—the Dependence of his Creatures—the Nature of our Souls—the Truths of natural Religion, &c. &c. but by Metaphysics? If he deny us the Assistance of Metaphysical Argument, we must withdraw our Attention from some of the most elegant, most useful, Disquisitions in the Theory of Science. But notwithstanding the Levity of a frivolous Age, I trust that *real Knowledge* will be safe by it's Solidity; and that the Ponderous Erudition of Aristotle will be had in Reverence, when the fugitive Trifles of a Modern Essay, like Gallic Balloons, will

will mount by their Lightneſs and be loſt in the Regions of Oblivion.

A Reformation in our higher Schools is now become neceſſary to their very Being. The public Voice is loud in their Condemnation. Parents are alarmed. And thoſe, who are ſo unpoliſhed in their Opinions, and ſo unfaſhionable in their Practice, as to make the Moral Intereſts of their Sons an Object of Attention, have removed them from an Atmoſphere that ſhed ſo malignant an Influence on their Hearts. It is a Queſtion in Controverſy if any Advantages can ariſe from a public Education adequate to the Probabilities of Seduction and Ruin? It is not in my Power to determine the

Diſpute.

Diſpute. I think it is uſeful to place *ſome* Boys in a numerous School to rouze the Torpor of their Being by Emulation: whilſt *others* are ſafer in Solitude and Silence. But perhaps the Medium is the moſt eligible: and ten or twelve young Men of equal Rank and Fortune may enjoy all the Advantages of both Syſtems in the fulleſt Perfection. They will be ſecured by their Equality, from the Dominion of thoſe oppoſite Tempers which diſgrace a larger Seminary—the aſſuming and haughty Superiority of Rank, and the abject Adulation and baſe Compliances of inferior Life. At the ſame Time that the moral Habitudes of the Mind may be eaſily ſtrengthened or corrected as Opportunity offers. And

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as to a Spirit of Emulation, it will burn with a brighter and ſtronger Flame in a Band of generous Youth, than in the promiſcuous Multitude of a public School.

If, therefore, liberal yet ſevere Diſcipline be not maintained at Eaton, Weſtminſter, Wincheſter, &c. if Truth and Juſtice, Religion and Piety be not eſtabliſhed amongſt them, we muſt look for the entire Deſertion of thoſe famous Seminaries: more eſpecially as the Public are now become ſenſible to the Importance of Oratory, and the Cultivation of the Engliſh Language; to both which invaluable Branches of polite Inſtruction they deny Admittance; and with all the faſtidious Pertinacity

tinacity of Pedants adhere to *Formulas*, which a Revolution of Manners have rendered abſurd.

I now proceed, Sir, to that Part of Vindex's Letter in which I am perſonally concerned. The Poſition which demands my preſent attention is, *That I am defective in the learned Languages, and groſsly Ignorant.* In Compariſon with the vaſt and unexplored Regions before me, my Acquiſitions in Science are few indeed! I feel and lament the limited Powers of my Soul. Till it receives new Energies in another and a better World its vaſt Deſires muſt be denied. But I wiſh to be underſtood that I reſtrict the Conceſſion of Ignorance to what is *yet unknown*: I am by no Means

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diſpoſed to make it from an Eſtimate of Ability with Vindex, or any of thoſe GREAT MEN alluded to in his Letter. In Support of Reputation and Truth, I will deny their Superiority: and if I could deſcend ſo low as to ſtain my Page with illiberal Speech, I would even give the LIE direct to his Aſſertion. But how can the Point in Diſpute be decided? In Queſtions of Wealth or Innocence, authentic Documents may be procured with Eaſe; and the Fact aſcertained beyond the Poſſibility of Miſtake: but in a Queſtion of mental Excellence the Difficulties are numerous. If the Deciſion be left to the Man himſelf, a Fulneſs of Self Eſteem may greatly influence his Verdict: and if it be ſubmitted

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to his Opponent, much is to be dreaded from the Partiality of his Views. To ſit down, therefore, in patient Diſgrace, or to appeal to the Public, to appeal to that learned Body of which Vindex is a Member, was my only Alternative: and I entreat you, Sir, by your Regard for Juſtice—your Veneration for Learning—and your Reverence for Truth, to grant the Requeſt of an injured Man. I aſk no Favors; I ſolicit no Indulgence. The Defender of my own Honor, I want no adventitious Aid. The only obligation I deſire to be under is to your official Civilities; and my Acknowledgments ſhall be perpetual. The Step by which you will oblige me is this —Communicate, Sir, the Receipt

of this Letter to the Heads of Houſes —inform them of the Injury I have received—and make known my Deſire of meeting my Adverſary, or any other Member, on claſſical Ground. The Language, Time, and Place, I leave to my Opponent's Choice: provided only that *Greek* be one of the Languages—that the Subject be previouſly concealed from both Parties—and that the Compoſition be on the Spot, with no Aid from Lexicons, Grammars, or any other Book whatever.

I think, Sir, that this Invitation (I will not call it a Challenge) is fair and unfettered. No real Schólar can have any Reaſon for declining the Conteſt. I am not ſo mean as

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to be deſpiſed, nor ſo formidable as to be feared. If however the Conteſt *be* declined, a candid Public will grant me all the Advantages of Victory.

Were I diſpoſed to make any Exception to the above general Addreſs, Mr. Huntingford ſhould be the Man. I conſider him as an Ornament to the Univerſity; as an Honor to his Country. I chearfully join my Voice with that of the admiring Multitude; and wiſh him Length of Days to enjoy his well deſerved Applauſe. I will, nevertheleſs, uſe the Freedom of Criticiſm and ſay, that he has not yet reached the *ne plus ultra* of Perfection. His Odes are of unrivalled Excellence

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confidered as modern Productions: but yet, if my Eye and Ear be claſſical, they are chiefly Engliſh Idiom in Grecian Dreſs. I ſought, with little ſucceſs, for the chaſte Beauties and elegant Simplicity of the Attic Muſe. And yet, if he were leſs in the Practice of numerous Compoſition 'till he be *perfectly* Maſter of a Grecian Style, (a Work of infinite Labor) the Republic of Letters might expect in Huntingford, a ſecond Anacreon.

What I have hitherto advanced is Matter of ſmall Moment: what follows is of unſpeakable Importance. Whether I, or any other Man, can write Greek in the poliſhed Periods of Iſocrates; or ſweep with a

Maſter's

Maſter's Hand the Æolian Lyre, is an Enquiry of idle Curioſity when contraſted with, WHAT MUST I DO TO INHERIT ETERNAL LIFE? On a Subject ſo mutually, and ſo deeply intereſting, I hope I ſhall be permitted to enter, in full Poſſeſſion of your Candor. I might indeed be well excuſed from replying to the Charge of Methodiſm, 'till I am told what it is. Of an undefined Crime no one can plead either guilty or innocent. From unknown Premiſes, who can make any Inference? Ignorant and illiterate are relative Terms: all the World knows their Meaning. But what is Methodiſm? Thus I might interrogate my Opponent, and thus I might avoid a Diſcuſſion. But of the

the Hope that is in me, Reverend Sir, "*I am not aſhamed.*" My Principles, I truſt, will endure the Light of Day, and ſtand the ſevereſt Criticiſm. If they cannot, I will renounce them.

FREEDOM OF SENTIMENT is one of the nobleſt Privileges of our Nature: and I claim it as the Birthright of Man to exerciſe an unbounded Liberty in my Reſearches after Truth; to entertain what Ideas I may pleaſe of the Deity; and to follow my own Inclinations in Modes of Devotion: and I thought that Men of liberal Learning and expanded Minds never preſumed to arraign the religious Tenets of Mankind, and that to

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ſtigmatize by a Name, what cannot be combated by Argument, was a moſt degrading Subterfuge.

We enter on this wonderful Scene, with unoccupied Minds. Antecedent to Reaſon and Obſervation, we have fewer Ideas than Brutes. The Deity, it is true, is before us, in his Works. But thoſe Evidences of his Being will affect our Hearts in unequal Degrees. With *ſome* they will have no Influence; with *others* they will have all the weight of Demonſtration. But ſtill more diverſified in their Effects are the Evidences of *revealed* Religion. The natural Capacities of the Soul.—the Habitudes of the Mind—Education—Example, and a Combination of other Cauſes

will have their ſeperate Influence, and contribute their Share to the Formation of the Man. And in my Mind, it is Proof of blind Attachment, of ſinful Preſumption, in poor Mortality to aſſume the Office of religious Dictator: ſince no Man can make good a Claim to Infallibility. We have Permiſſion, and indeed it is our Duty, to uſe every Kind effort to Conviction, when we think we ſee a Fellow Creature in the Belief of Principles unfavorable to the Happineſs of Society, or unfriendly to his own eternal Intereſts. But the Mode of Converſion ſhould be manly, liberal, and decent: ſhew him where his Sentiments are in Contradiction to Reaſon and Revelation; and preſs him with the preſent

ſent and future Conſequences of his Errors. If he continue deaf to Remonſtrance and unmoved by Argument, leave him—to the tender Mercies of God.

But tho' I am, and ever will be, free and independent in Sentiment, yet I rejoice when I diſcover a Coincidence of Opinion with great and able Men. Thus I am both comforted and ſtrengthened by the Conſideration, that the holy Compilers of our Church Articles thought as I think: and that by a Reference to them, my Creed may be known. But ſince the Language of thoſe Articles is held by many to be of problematical Authority, admitting great Latitude of Interpretation, and af-

fording Argument to Men of oppo-ſite Notions, I think it expedient to ſtate, in my own Terms, the Syſtem of Faith I eſpouſe. Taking Leave to premiſe, that if any of your learned Body do me the Honor of controverting my Poſitions, that I ſhall hope to meet in *them*, what they will find in *me*—candid Argument, and a Breaſt open to Conviction. The ſubſequent Creed has, in the Light I at preſent view it, all the Dignity and Evidence of eternal Truth. But perhaps, in another Point of Proſpect, I might perceive its Futility: and moſt aſſuredly will I receive that Man into my warmeſt Friendſhips, who will ſhew the Fallacy of any of its Articles. But till this be done, I will bind them to my

my Heart, eſtimate them dearer than my vital Breath, and repeat them (if God permit) in the Flames of Martyrdom.

POSITION.

I. (*a*) The Book, called the HOLY SCRIPTURES, was written by the Inſpiration of the Spirit of God.

II. (*b*) Our common Anceſtor Adam was created with all the Powers of his Mind in holy Perfection.

III. He

(*a*) As the Confidence of many in holy Scripture has been ſhaken by the diſingenuous Inſinuations of Mr. Gibbons, I earneſtly refer ſuch to a moſt maſterly Reply by the Rev. Mr. Joſeph Milner, of Hull.

(*b*) I could quote an endleſs Number of Paſſages from divine Revelation to corroborate the ſeveral Articles of this Creed; and ſhew that human Reaſon makes as reſpectable a Figure in it's Defence, as when it appears in Oppoſition: notwithſtanding the Opinion of an eminent Man* that revealed Truths are not a Subject of rational Animadverſion. But I reſerve myſelf for a more elaborate Reply; as ſome Gentleman may think proper to attempt a Confutation.

* SOAME JENYNS, Eſq;

III. Adam was the federal Repreſentative of all the human Kind.

IV. Adam forfeited, by Diſobedience, the Friendſhip of God, deſtroyed the Innocence and Harmony of his Nature, and involved his Poſterity in all the Conſequences of his Guilt.

V. The Holineſs and Dignity of the divine Perfections demanded Satisfaction.

VI. Man was unable to make Satisfaction

VII. The infinite Wiſdom of God diſcovered, and his tender Mercies admitted, a vicarious Sacrifice.

VIII. CHRIST JESUS was that very Sacrifice, Oblation or Satisfaction, for the Sins of the believing World.

IX. CHRIST JESUS the Son, in Relation to the Godhead, is coeſſential in Nature, coeternal in Dignity, and coequal in Duration, with the Father.*

* See Doctor Clarke on the Attributes. P. 75

X. By Faith in the conſummate Obedience and meritorious Sufferings of Chriſt, evidenced by a Life of correſpondent Purity and Holineſs, Man is reſtored to the Favor of God, and becomes an Heir of immortal Happineſs.

XI. It is incumbent on thoſe, who reject Salvation thro' Chriſt, to make good their Pretenſions to eternal Life, by a perfect Obedience to the written Law.

XII. The inward Propenſities of Man; in Combination with *ab extra* Influence, will render Juſtification a Work of ſuch difficult Accompliſhment, that no one of ſober Thought will attempt it.

XIII. No Man in a State of Nature, I mean unaſſiſted by the Spirit of God, can have a ſaving Faith in Chriſt.

XIV. To the free Grace and Favor of the Supreme Being, uninfluenced by antecedent Loveliness, every Chriſtian is indebted for Salvation.

XV. If

XV. If the Queſtion remain in Controverſy for ever, whether the Bleſſed be ſaved conditionally, or unconditionally, thus much is manifeſt, that Sinners are condemned becauſe they chooſe Darkneſs before Light, and will not have the Man (Chriſt) "to reign over them."

XVI. He who acts in Conformity to the Volitions of his Mind, is accountable for his Conduct.

XVII. The Book of God ſpeaks in a Strain of tender Compaſſion to our fallen Nature, warns us of the Danger to which our Paſſions hurry us, and invites us to lay hold of proffered Salvation.

XVIII. It is the Wiſdom of Man to liſten to the Voice of Mercy, to make early Application to a Throne of Grace: and to be diligent in the Uſe of appointed Means.

XIX. To be devoted to the tranſitory Satisfactions of Senſe, and to be unaffected by

by Objects of eternal Consequence, is to degrade the moral excellency of an intelligent Being, and to renounce all Pretensions to REASON, AND RELIGION, AND ETERNAL LIFE.

XX. Renovation of Heart constitutes a Christian: not external Conformity to a Scheme of Devotion.

XXI. Renovation of Heart is evidenced by outward Innocence of Life, and by an inward Testimony of God's Spirit.

XXII. Renovation of Heart is not *contrary* to Reason, but *above* it.

XXIII. We are by Nature destitute of the Perceptions necessary to Christian Experience.

XXIV. By no Operation of natural Affections, no Combination of the present

Materials of Thought, can Men ever attain to thoſe divine Senſations.

XXV. Chriſtian Experience will ſeem to be the Sum of Abſurdities, 'till we receive a new ſpiritual Senſe, a Principle of Grace from above; and then the *Fooliſhneſs of the Croſs* will appear to be the *Wiſdom of God.*

XXVI The Experience which is conformable to Scripture is not Enthuſiaſm.

XXVII. In my Eſtimation of Things, a Cultivated Mind is the Glory of our Nature. GREEK and LATIN are an honorable Appendage to a Man of Faſhion, and indiſpenſably requiſite in the accompliſhed Phyſician, Lawyer, and Divine: but at the ſame Time I confeſs that a Man, who cannot even ſpell his own Name, may have a ſaving View of the Freedom, Fitneſs and Efficacy of the excellent, tranſcendently excellent, Plan of human Redemption, may be

be a Partaker of all the Bleſſings of Faith in God's ſuffering Son, and be made meet, by the Spirit, for the Inheritance of the Saints in Glory.

XXVIII. Every Variety of Men hath it's Diſtinctions. Obſtinacy and oſtentatious Vanity diſtinguiſh the Pedant: Modeſty and liberal Enlargement of Mind, the real Scholar. Pride and bitter Invective point out the ſelf-applauding Phariſee: Humility, Meekneſs, and Moderation, the TRUE CHRISTIAN.

It is Time, Sir, that I ſhould make my Acknowledgements to your Patience, and take my Leave. My Sentiments are now before the Public. Nor ſhall I bluſh to call them mine, 'till Reaſon and Revelation demonſtrate their Abſurdity. If I err, I have a Claim to the Hu-

manity of thoſe, who are better informed—let them inſtruct me. If my Opinions be founded in Truth, give them Admiſſion to the Heart—it will be perilous to reject them. Some Good, at all Events, muſt ariſe from the Conteſt: the Improvement of our Candor and Moderation will be the Conſequence of an equal Defence; and Conviction of Error reſult from ſuperior Evidence. I am not to be underſtood as ſpeaking of all Deſcriptions. To Minds preoccupied by Syſtem, and indiſpoſed to the Reception of religious Truth, every Species of Proof is offered IN VAIN. I utterly deſpair of their Conviction. With ſuch, Aſperity of Cenſure is able Argument, confident Aſſertion the beſt.

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Demonſtration, and the Cry of METHODISM! deciſive Victory. But by Men, to whom TRUTH is ineſtimably dear, I may hope to be favored with a generous Intercourſe of Idea, ennobled by the Determination of renouncing Error, tho' protected by eſtabliſhed Cuſtom; and of embracing Truth, tho' oppoſed by habitual Prejudice.

In fine, Sir, if Vindex, from a Review of this Letter, can find Nothing in Evidence of his Aſſertion that I am an Ignorant Methodiſt, an Aſſertion obviouſly deſigned to effect my Ruin; the World will allow me Leave to change the Term Ignorance into Impudence, and Methodiſm into Malevolence, and with a

Retort

Retort courteous, throw them full in his Face. But this would be to loſe Sight of the true Dignity of my Profeſſion. My Adverſary has my Forgiveneſs and my Prayers.

I have the Honor to be, Sir, with every Sentiment of Reſpect and Regard,

Your very obedient, and

very humble Servant,

PHILIP WITHERS.

Paddington,
October 28, 1783.

Poſt

Poſt Imp. I did not ſee the St. James's Chronicle 'till the 25th. My Reply of Courſe was compoſed in ſo much Haſte, that I became apprehenſive of Inaccuracy. But upon a careful Peruſal of it ſince it came from Preſs, I am ſatisfied that I have not been once diverted from CANDOR AND TRUTH: if a Shade of Severity be any where viſible, it is when I am ſpeaking of Mr. Knox. It is not my Deſign to offend that Gentleman, and I entreat him to admit this Apology.

The following Opinion of this Reply to VINDEX, *is copied verbatim from the Monthly Review, for December*, 1783. By Withers himself

A Letter to the Rev. SAMUEL DENNIS, D.D. Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, in Reply to a Letter, ſigned VINDEX, in the St. James's Chronicle of the 16th of October, 1783. By the Rev. PHILIP WITHERS, D.D. Chaplain to Lady Dowager Hereford. 8vo. 1s. Dodſley.

VINDEX, in the paper above referred to, in endeavouring to vindicate our univerſities againſt Mr. Knox, at the expence of the private ſchools, threw out ſome very ſevere reflections on the latter, as being often under the direction of ignorant perſons, who impoſe themſelves on the public, as able ſchoolmaſters, and 'fill the univerſities with boys who diſgrace thoſe *ſacred* ſeminaries.' With ſuch ſchools, he ſays, the villages about London ſwarm; and he inſtances one, which he more than inſinuates, is kept by 'a poor illiterate Methodiſt.' Dr. Withers, apprehending this ſtroke to be levelled at himſelf, makes this appeal to Dr. Dennis, in order to repel this attack; and *moſt effectually*, indeed has he removed the imputation of ignorance, &c. We have not lately peruſed a better written performance The language is ſpirited and elegant; the ſentiments are candid, liberal, and modeſtly advanced; and the whole beſpeaks the writer a *Gentleman* and a *Scholar*.

With reſpect to the other charge, in relation to the author's religious principles, he very *properly* anſwers it by giving us his *creed*; a creed of which no ſincere chriſtian needs be aſhamed; and on the articles of which *Vindex*, we apprehend, will find it very difficult to fix the charge of methodiſm:—but as Dr. W. ſays, *What is methodiſm?*

On the whole, we imagine that every candid reader of this little tract, will regard the paper pupliſhed by Vindex, ſo far as it affects Dr. Withers, as a *malignant and groundleſs libel*.

P. Withers

About 1777 or 8 proposals were circulated for printing a translation of Cebes Table with copper plates by some Gentlemen of the University of Cambridge

One Withers a Clergyman had waited on the Archbishop of Canterbury & propond in the name of the Editors that the profits of the edition, after defraying the expences of it, should be given to the Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy — The A. Bp. received him & his proposals civilly, but declined giving any direction to them, till he should have some farther enquiry

Yet Mr Withers drew up & circulated fresh proposals for

the work, as patronised by the
A. Bp & dispersed a circular
letter addressed to all the friends
& Patrons of the Sons of the
Clergy soliciting their encourage
ment & Subscriptions.

In the mean time I had by the
A. Bps directions sent to Cambridge
to enquire concerning these
Gentlemen Editors; both they
& their undertaking were totally
unknown there; except, that
Mr P. Withers I learned, that
a person of that name had been
admitted of Queens College
but had never resided.

Further Enquiry was then
made in London & Mr Bacon
Treasurer to the Corporation of the
Sons of the Clergy wrote by the
A. Bps order to Messrs Fry